

## Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 27, 2013

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### **Savannah City Government SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES MAYOR AND ALDERMEN WORK SESSION CITY MANAGER’S BRIEFING June 27, 2013 – 10:00 am**

PRESENT: Mayor Edna B. Jackson, Presiding  
Alderman Van R. Johnson, II Mayor Pro-Tem (arrived at 10:50 am)  
Alderman Tony Thomas, Chairman of Council  
Alderman Mary Osborne, Vice-Chairman of Council  
Aldermen John Hall, Carol Bell, Mary Ellen Sprague,  
Tom Bordeaux and Estella Shabazz

City Manager Stephanie S. Cutter  
City Attorney W. Brooks Stillwell  
Asst. City Attorney William W. Shearouse

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

#### City Manager Vision and Overview

City Manager Stephanie S. Cutter gave a presentation titled “My Vision for Moving Forward” which addressed the City’s foundation of trust, transparency and accountability. Her philosophy is every voice sends a message that should be heard and a voice of reason represents the voice of an engaged and united community. Challenges result in opportunities waiting to be explored. The vision for City Council is to ensure that Savannah will be a safe, environmentally healthy and economically thriving community for all its citizens. The City Manager will provide responsible leadership and sound fiscal management of programs and services that address Council priorities. The PowerPoint presentation is attached and made a part of the permanent record of this meeting.

During and at the close of the presentation the following questions were asked and comments made:

Alderman Hall: Asked for an explanation of effective local ordinances and quality of life and if these two items are tied together. Ms. Cutter responded yes. He also stated there are some ordinances that he believes should be amended to currently reflect what is going on today. He wants more emphasis placed on code enforcement sections, dilapidated housing and long-term signage on vacant structures.

Alderman Bordeaux: He feels this type of presentation provides pertinent information that’s made him aware of how much is going on and what needs to go on in the City. This overview also shows how many things the government is involved in by necessity and by need. It helps everyone including the citizens understand that the City and the City Manager has a big job, and her presentation and what she is doing is appreciated by all.

## Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 27, 2013

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Mayor Jackson: The City Manager's Vision for Moving Forward will be the focus of the next Town Hall Meeting. She asked Council if that sounded okay to them and were all in accord. She also agrees that Council needs to have further discussion on the various ordinances.

Alderman Shabazz: Regarding the 2014 budget - she is very glad about the City Manager's vision of right-sizing and feels it is a good direction for the City. Does the city have someone on staff from the Tourism Office that oversees and manages tourism related issues? Ms. Cutter responded yes, but it is handled piece meal by one person and represents only one aspect of an already overloaded position. Alderman Shabazz appreciates Ms. Cutter's vision on this particular item as well as the entire presentation.

Alderman Osborne: Why isn't West Savannah on the Areas of Focus list? Ms. Cutter stated earlier in the year she had a discussion with Chief Lovett and asked him to identify the areas in need of more concentration. Chief Lovett pointed out Cuyler Brownville, Midtown and Eastside as areas requiring special attention. The City has also received numerous calls about the Edgemere/Sackville neighborhood and thought it was a good idea to have police pay close attention to overgrown shrubbery, sanitation and the trash pickup schedule. There were also rental property issues on the Southside causing a nuisance to the area, and that is pretty much how the list was derived.

Alderman Johnson: What does the data state and will the data point to the areas of focus? Ms. Cutter stated the data came from the 2012 crime stats. Once Chief Lovett identified these areas, she asked the bureau chiefs to review their data, look at everything going on in their areas to determine what was really in need of attention. Alderman Johnson asked were these benchmarked. Ms. Cutter responded yes.

Alderman Thomas: What is Ms. Cutter's definition of Southside? Ms. Cutter stated DeRenne Avenue, south. He asked, are you focusing on the total area of DeRenne south or pockets? She responded pockets. Can you identify the pockets? She said she would be happy to provide some examples. One street that comes to mind is Deerfield Road which has multiple maintenance issues that were causing concern among residents. At one time, the police agreed that Paradise Park was an issue in addition to concerns with Middleground Road and Apache Avenue. Alderman Thomas stated there is definitely a problem with rental property within the Southside corridor as well.

Alderman Hall: He was at a meeting last night and was informed about three shootings in the Edgemere/Sackville area. A lot of the crime in the area is perpetrated by outsiders coming into the neighborhood.

Alderman Osborne: A good thing to suggest to neighborhood associations is development of a box titled "hot spots" that is provided to the police at each meeting.

Mayor Jackson: The "hot spot" box is a very good suggestion. She asked Ms. Cutter to also add Sunset to the areas of focus list. The Mayor suggested a work session for the City Manager's Vision for Moving Forward.

## Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 27, 2013

---

Alderman Sprague: Her focus is on public education of property owner responsibilities. She is extremely blessed to have absolutely terrific neighborhood association presidents who are vital to the success of her work. She stated they could all use a sit-down work session on code compliance so that everyone is educated on the current rules. Since neighborhood association presidents rotate, a work session focused on this would be very helpful.

Alderman Shabazz: She would also like to see a focus on Cann Park and Jackson Park as this is one of the areas at the top of her priority list. There are also issues with rental property and parking on lawns and more focus should be on enforcement. Prostitution, along with drugs, is also a growing problem in Liberty City. The residents would like to get a handle on both issues before they become worse.

Alderman Bell: We always want buy-in from residents and business owners and there are many advantages when we engage neighborhood associations.

Alderman Johnson: The City used to do “Super Saturdays” which were extremely effective. We can conduct Super Saturdays for our neighborhood associations and transmit our message the way we want to put it out. This also creates the opportunity to have workshops on these specific issues. An informed electorate is always the best electorate. He was asked about Super Saturday and he stated it was basically a leadership institute for citizens by Community Development. They discussed issues such as governance of community associations, advocacy best practices of various neighborhoods, etc.

Alderman Hall: All the districts have varying issues and he is concerned about the many auto repair shops throughout the City.

Mayor Jackson: She stated Council should compile a list of issues for their respective districts. Ms. Cutter suggested they should mark-up the presentation with their comments and submit them to her by July 7, 2013. Mayor Jackson said this is a well thought out presentation and obvious that Ms. Cutter has listened to everyone. She thanked the City Manager and had everyone give her a hand.

### Executive Session

Upon a motion by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Sprague and unanimously carried, approval was given to go into Executive Session to discuss litigation.

Upon a motion by Alderman Johnson seconded by Alderman Sprague and unanimously carried, approval was given to come out of Executive Session where no votes were taken.

### Boards, Commissions & Authorities

Council reviewed applications and made recommendations for appointments to Boards, Commissions, and Authorities.

## Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 27, 2013

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### Council broke for lunch

City Manager Stephanie Cutter presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of June 27, 2013. The agenda is attached and made a part of the permanent record.

Mayor Jackson adjourned this meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dyanne C. Reese". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dyanne C. Reese, MMC, Clerk of Council